

Chapter 2-The California Building Standards Commission

The process of adopting State regulations must be overseen by some governmental entity. Much of the California Code of Regulations is overseen by the Office of Administrative Law under the authority in Government Code Sections 11340 through 11361, a part of the Administrative Procedure Act. In the case of building standards in CCR Title 24 however, the oversight authority is granted to the California Building Standards Commission (CBSC) by Health and Safety Code, Division 13, Part 2.5 (commencing with section 18901), known as the California Building Standards Law.



The CBSC has 10 members, known as commissioners, who are appointed by the Governor. The State Senate must confirm each appointee. The CBSC Chairperson is required by law to be the Secretary of the State and Consumer Services Agency, who is also appointed by the Governor.

The California Building Standards Law in the Health and Safety Code requires that members of the CBSC be representative of the general public and the regulated industry. Excluding the Chairperson, the Commission must be comprised of:

- One Architect
- One Mechanical, Electrical or Fire Protection engineer.
- One Structural Engineer
- One Licensed Contractor
- One person from organized labor
- One local building official
- One local fire official
- Three members of the general public, with at least one physically disabled.

The terms of Commissioners are for a period of 4 years and the termination dates are staggered. A staff of 6 (as of 2000/2001 budget), an Executive Director, a Coordinating Council of State adopting agencies, and Advisory Committees of volunteers, supports the CBSC. The Coordinating Council is authorized by Health and Safety Code Section 18926 and requires representation from the following State agencies:

- Department of Health Services
- Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development
- Department of Housing and Community Development
- Department of Industrial Relations
- Office of the State Fire Marshal
- California Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission (commonly called the Energy Commission)
- General Services (delegated to the Division of the State Architect within the Department of General Services)

These State agencies are required to work on the Coordinating Council for the purpose of coordinating the proposed building standards from each of the adopting agencies. Conflicts and omissions are to be eliminated through this coordination effort. Additionally, the CBSC may require one agency to assist another agency with the development of necessary building standards.

The Code Advisory Committees are authorized by Health and Safety Code section 18927. The CBSC appoints volunteers to serve on the committees and advise the CBSC on building standards presented to the CBSC by adopting agencies. The volunteers are not paid other than for travel expenses. The Code Advisory Committees currently utilized by the CBSC are:

- Accessibility Committee
- Plumbing, Electrical, Mechanical, and Energy Committee
- Building, Fire and Other Committee
- Structural Design/Lateral Forces Committee
- Health Facilities Committee

Following the activities of the Coordinating Council, the individual State agencies with a legislative mandate to promulgate building standards present their proposed building standards, including amendments to adopted building standards, to the CBSC. The CBSC uses the Code Advisory Committees for the technical review of the proposals. The CBSC makes the proposed building standards available to the public and conducts public hearings in order to receive public comment on building standards proposed by the State agencies. Upon being satisfied that the proposed building standards are necessary, clear, and within the authority of the State adopting agencies as specified in Health and Safety Code Section 18930 (commonly referred to as the “Nine Point Criteria”), the CBSC approves the proposed building standards for adoption. When proposed building standards are adopted by the CBSC, they are published as CCR Title 24 provisions.

There are exceptions to the process discussed above however. The California Energy Commission and the State Historical Building Safety Board, responsible for Parts 6 and 8 of CCR Title 24 respectively, conduct their own public hearings and submit their adopted building standards to the CBSC for publication in CCR Title 24. The other State agencies submit proposed building standards to the CBSC for their adoption.

The CBSC Internet website is available at “www.bsc.ca.gov” which provides information regarding the current and future activities, bulletins, meeting schedules, and more.

